Mail Merge Formatting Problem

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I prepare bills using Office XP. An Excel spreadsheet serves as my database, and I use Word's Mail Merge feature to print the bills. But if a dollar amount ends with a zero, Mail Merge will not print the zero. For example, *$I9.20* prints as *$19.2,* though the spreadsheet shows the amount correctly. How can I fix this problem?

Harold Cook

Excel stores numbers internally as plain, unadorned numbers, with no specific formatting. In your worksheet, you have formatted the cells to display a dollar sign, along with two decimal places. This precise formatting doesn't carry over when you perform a mail merge. You must add a *numeric picture* to the field to specify the formatting. The numeric picture stipulates how a number will display.

Open your merge document and press Alt-F9 to show the merge field codes; they will look something like this: {MERGEFIELD "owed"}. Find the one that corresponds to the payment amount and insert this text: \# "$0.00". The result might look like this: {MERGEFIELD \# "$0.00" "owed"}. Repeat the procedure for any other numeric fields and save the merge document. Now when you perform the mail merge operation, your amounts will be formatted correctly.

Word has a number of options for displaying numbers. To learn more about the feature, search Word's help for *Numeric Picture (\#) field switch.*